

## Location

Schloss Ringenberg is a studio and exhibition center located on the Lower Rhine River, on the A3 motorway between the Rhine-Ruhr area and the southeastern Netherlands. The castle accommodates ten live-in artists' studios and 320 square meters of exhibition space.

The studios are used each year by four full-year German fellows and four six-month Dutch fellows as well as three artists as permanent tenants.

The program of events at the castle revolves around contemporary art. In addition to internal activities such as workshops, work conferences or symposia, a wide range of educational activities and visual experiences are offered to the public. Ongoing exchanges take place with exhibition institutions and cultural initiatives in the region. Since 2000 greater emphasis has been placed on intensifying contact with art institutions in the Netherlands.

Sponsor of the studio center, and thus responsible for the programs and their administration, is the Derik Baegert Society. This registered association has around 100 members and is managed by a board of volunteers. Membership fees start at 40 euros per annum. Beyond the regular fees, a friends' association sustainably supports the work of the society with higher membership donations. The members of this friends' association are granted special opportunities to come into contact with the artists and to use the castle premises.

Chairman of the board of the Derik Baegert Society is Christof Schmidt-Rotthauwe, aka Löns. Artistic director since 2000 is Dr. Gudrun Bott.

Close contact with the Netherlands has been part of the castle's history since the Late Middle Ages.

Around 1223 the Lords of Dingden erected a solid fortress dwelling in the marshlands of the Ijssel River on the border between the territories of the Bishop of Münster and the Duke of Kleve. In 1329 they hired four Dutch experts to drain the marshes, who then settled with their families in Ringenberg. The colonists dug trenches and built dams that still shape the structure of today's village. In return for their work, they were given land as well as their own jurisdiction and municipal administration.

From 1350–1620, Ringenberg was the official seat of the Duchy of Kleve.

In 1629 – during the Thirty Years' War – the castle was completely destroyed by the Dutch.

In 1648 the Dutch Colonel Jacob von Spaen received Ringenberg as a fief in recognition of his services. Together with his brothers Alexander and Bernhard I, he erected atop the remains of the old fortress today's castle in a reserved Baroque style.

In the ensuing centuries, the castle changed hands several times, until it was purchased in 1924 by the Von Plettenberg family.

In 1968 the gallerist Bodo Bratke founded the Derik Baegert Society with the goal of establishing a studio center for young artists in the northern wing of the castle. As namesake, Bratke chose the painter Derik Baegert (1440–1515) of Wesel, one of the most prominent representatives of Late Gothic art in the region.

The studio center opened in 1979.

In 1987 the city council of Hamminkeln decided to acquire the castle and renovate it.

Once the renovations were completed in 1995, the Derik Baegert Society was able to acquire the southern wing as well, along with parts of the central section.

[Detailed History of Schloss Ringenberg \(pdf – in German\)](#)